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# WILLIAM FOWLER,

## THE MAGISTRATE,

AND

# ONE LINE OF HIS DESCENDANTS.

By WILLIAM CHAUNCEY FOWLER.

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### WILLIAM FOWLER, THE EMIGRANT ANCESTOR.

WILLIAM FOWLER, the Magistrate, was the emigrant ancestor of all or most of the Fowlers of Connecticut. He arrived in Boston from England, June 26, 1637, in company with Mr. JOHN DAVENPORT, THEOPHILUS EATON, PETER PRUDDEN, and "others of good character and fortunes."

Whether he was the "William Fowler" mentioned in NEAL'S "HISTORY OF THE PURITANS," chap. 8, as imprisoned with others in Bridewell, London, 1592, is not entirely certain. About that time a Puritan congregation was discovered in Islington, a part of London, and fifty-six persons were imprisoned. As families bearing the name of Fowler resided in that locality, he may have been one of the prisoners, though at that time a very young man. He is spoken of as an "old man," when he settled in Milford. He may have come from Yorkshire or thereabouts, as his minister, Rev. Peter Prudden, came from Edgeton, in that county.

He came, by water, with Mr. Davenport and others to *Quinnipiac*, the Indian name of New Haven, leaving Boston, March 30, 1638, and arriving in about a fortnight. Here he resided a year or more, was at the famous meeting in Mr. Newman's barn, June 4, 1639, when the constitution of the New Haven Colony was

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adopted. He subscribed that agreement. He afterwards removed to Milford, called by the Indians, *Wepawaug*. The town was named after Milford, England, the native place of some of the settlers.

The deed of Milford was given to WILLIAM FOWLER, EDMUND TAPP, ZACHARIAH WHITMAN and ALEXANDER BRYAN, in trust for the body of planters. It was executed on the 12th of February, 1639. The consideration was, 6 coats, 10 blankets, 1 kettle, besides a number of hoes, knives, hatchets, and glasses, (mirrors.) The instrument was signed by ANSANTAWAE the Sagamore, by ANACOUSET, ANSHUTA, MANATAQUE, and others.

On Nov. 20, 1639, "WILLIAM FOWLER, EDMUND TAPP, ZACHARIAH WHITMAN, JOHN ASTWOOD and RICHARD MILES were chosen judges in all civil affairs, to try all causes between man and man; and as a court to punish any offence and misdemeanor, and to admit inhabitants, and divide land."

At the second General Court in Milford, held Mch. 9, 1640, "it was agreed between WILLIAM FOWLER and the Brethren, that he should build a mill and have her going by the last of September, when the town were to take it off his hands if they saw proper, for £100; or else the Brethren should elect five judges, who should appoint what toll he should take." For his encouragement the town made him a grant of 30 acres of land, which long bore the name of the mill lot.

They afterwards granted him the permanent use of the stream. The agreement had reference to a grist-mill, but he afterwards added a saw-mill. This mill establishment is yet retained in the family. "It was the *first* mill erected in New Haven Colony."

"Fowler's Mill" was of so much importance to the community, that upon its being injured by a freshet, in December, 1645, it was voted, at the General Court, "that all the town should help Mr. Fowler upon his mill, and he was to call for them, each man, a day, till he should have gone through the town. And if he should not go through the town, in one year, the same liberty was granted till he had been through."

On the 26th of October, 1643, WILLIAM FOWLER and EDMUND TAPP of Milford, were chosen magistrates of the colony of New Haven; and on the succeeding day the articles of confederation for the jurisdiction were drawn and passed.

The magistrates present, were, THEOPHILUS EATON, Governor; STEPHEN GOODYEAR, Deputy-Governor; THOMAS GREGSON, WILLIAM FOWLER, EDMUND TAPP, THURSTON RAYNOR. THOMAS FUGIL, Secretary; THOMAS KIMBERLY, Marshal.

William Fowler, and the others who were the members of the church, were enrolled as "Free Planters" in Milford, Nov. 29, 1639. Those who were not members of the church were not enrolled as free planters, and had not the privilege of voting in civil matters.

The method of forming the church of Milford was the same as forming that of New Haven. It appears that they were both formed on the same day, namely, August 22, 1639. The *Seven Pillars* of the Milford church were PETER PRUDDEN, WILLIAM FOWLER, EDMUND TAPP, ZACHARIAH WHITMAN, JOHN ASTWOOD, THOMAS BUCKINGHAM, THOMAS WELCH. Of these, ZACHARIAH WHITMAN, WILLIAM FOWLER and EDMUND TAPP were deputed for the imposition of hands upon the Rev. Peter Prudden, at his installation.

WILLIAM FOWLER died 1660. His will, presented in 1661 by his son, William Fowler, was not recorded, and cannot be found. He was enrolled at New Haven as having property to the amount of £800. His house-lot, in Milford, was 7 acres 2 quarters. He left three or four children, namely, WILLIAM FOWLER, JOHN FOWLER, MARY FOWLER, who married JOHN CAFFINCH; and, perhaps, AMBROSE FOWLER, who removed to Windsor.

He is reported to have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, had a high reputation for wisdom and piety, and had the confidence of the colony as a magistrate. He acted as magistrate from 1643 to 1654.

For an account of CAPT. WILLIAM FOWLER, son of the magistrate, and of AMBROSE FOWLER, see memoir by HON. JAMES FOWLER, of Westfield, Mass.

## JOHN FOWLER—SECOND GENERATION.

JOHN FOWLER, the second son of William Fowler, sen., of Milford, had land allotted to him there, though he was not "a free planter," not then being a member of the church. He married MARY, daughter of GEORGE HUBBARD, 1647, and removed, with his father-in-law, to Guilford in 1649, where he remained. He is

mentioned as one of the "original planters." "He was a man of more note than any of the other children of William Fowler, sen." He was chosen deacon of the church in Guilford, 1664; deputy to the Colonial Court at New Haven, 1661 and 1664; and, after Connecticut and New Haven Colony united, 1665, he was a deputy to Hartford, in the General Assembly, May, 1665; May, 1666; October, 1666; May and October, 1667; May and October, 1668, and again, October, 1670; October, 1671; May and October, 1672; May and October, 1673; May and October, 1675. For his services the Legislature granted him one hundred (100) acres of land in *Coginchaug*, (Durham.)

The following is an extract from the Colony Records for 1670:

"This Court doth nominate and appoint Mr. George Hubbard, John Fowler, and William Johnson, to be Commissioners for and within the plantation of Guilford, and they three joyntly concurring, or any two of them, are invested with magistratical power there, and have power to hear and issue any case as the law directs to be issued by one magistrate; and Mr. George Hubbard is hereby invested with full power to grant summons according to law, and also to joyne persons in marriage, as need requires."

He died September 14, 1676. His wife died April 13, 1703. His will, drawn April 19, 1670, with a codicil, Sept., 1676, and proved June 12, 1677, is in the first volume of the *New Haven Prob. Rec.* His inventory shows real estate £405.3.11, personal estate £206.18.11. Total, £612.2.10, a rather large inventory for those days. He bought the homestead of Francis Bushnell, sen., of Guilford, of his daughter Rebecca, wife of John Lord, about 1647, and came to Guilford about that time. *Guilford Proprietors' Records*, *folio* 20.

Their children were ABIGAIL, born December, 1648, died 1651; MARY, born December 15, 1650, died single, October 15, 1670; ABRAHAM, born Aug. 29, 1652; JOHN, born 1654; MEHETABEL, born 1656, and died single, March 18, 1751; ELIZABETH, born April 30, 1658, and died single.

### ABRAHAM FOWLER—THIRD GENERATION.

ABRAHAM FOWLER, son of Deacon John Fowler, of Guilford, born August 29, 1652, married ELIZABETH BARTLETT, eldest daughter of DEACON GEORGE BARTLETT, of Guilford, Aug. 29,

1677. She died October 4, 1742. "He was a carpenter, but a man of more talent than any other of the name in Guilford." He was one of the deputies of Guilford to the General Court in Hartford, October, 1697; and again, October session, 1698; May and October, 1699; May session at Hartford, 1704; October session at New Haven, 1701, being the first session at New Haven after the union of the colonies. He was a deputy the two sessions of 1702; the two sessions of 1703; the October session, 1704; the October session, 1705; the two sessions, 1706; the two sessions, 1707; May, 1708; Oct., 1709; May and Oct., 1710; October, 1711; May, 1712.

At the next session he was elected to the House of Assistants, to which he was semi-annually chosen until his death.

He was appointed Justice of the Peace, 1705, and one of the Judges of the County Court, which station he held until his death, December, 1720, aged 68. He was also one of the Judges of the higher Court, having jurisdiction in matters of chancery.

The children of Hon. Abraham Fowler were, 1, ABIGAIL, born 1679; married Deac. PELATIAH LEETE, July 1, 1705; died Oct. 22, 1757; he died Oct. 12, 1768. 2, MARY, born 1681; married SAMUEL HOPSON, January 20, 1710; died October 17, 1717. 3, ABRAHAM, born 1683; died October 11, 1754. 4, EBENEZER, born 1684; died November 28, 1768. 5, DANIEL, born 1686, N. S.; died December 21, 1776, (90.) 6, JOSIAH, of Durham, born 1688; died September 7, 1757. 7, CALEB, born 1690; died January 3, 1724. 8, ELIZABETH, born 1694; married Colonel ANDREW WARD, father of General Andrew Ward, September 11, 1716; died February 26, 1794, nearly (100); he died July 13, 1778, in his 85th year.

His inventory was £1421.18.9. He had between 400 and 500 acres of valuable land in Guilford, and was one of the most wealthy of the inhabitants. He was, at his death, the magistrate, and the most eminent man in the town.

It should be added that he was a "sergeant" in King Philip's war, and was wounded; perhaps at the Narraganset swamp-fight, at the taking of the Fort. In the 3d volume *Colonial Records*, p. 18, is the following: "Upon the motion of Sergeant Abram Fowler, that the court would consider his disenablement by reason of his wounds he received by the enemy in the country's service;

they having considered the same, granted him the sum of four pounds, in full satisfaction for his service, and damage received by said wound."

### JOSIAH FOWLER—FOURTH GENERATION.

JOSIAH FOWLER, the fourth son of Abraham Fowler, sen., married HANNAH BALDWIN, Jan. 6, 1723. He removed to Durham, as early as 1714, as he is mentioned on the 70th page of the Proprietors' book, and his father Abraham Fowler, Esq., is mentioned as having married a couple in Durham that year. His "four hundred acre farm" is spoken of. He is mentioned in the same book with some of the principal men, as appointed to seat the Meeting House; and also as having liberty to erect a "*Sabbath Day House*" on the west line of the Wilkinson lot, south of Dr. Goodrich's house, which lot was owned by said Fowler. He was also appointed to take care of the public lands; was lister and surveyor and Captain. He built the largest house in the town, which he ever kept open for hospitality. He died September 7, 1757, in the 69th year of his age.

His children were, 1, JOSIAH, born March 21, 1724; removed to Northford; died May 17, 1802, aged 79 years; 2, HANNAH, born April 12, 1725, married STREET HALL of Wallingford, died ——; 3, CALEB, born January 6, 1727, died June 21, 1807; 4, ELIZABETH, born Oct. 11, 1728, married BENJAMIN MALTBY of Northford, died Dec. 31, 1810, in the 83d year of her age; 5, JONATHAN, born Aug. 30, 1730; moved to Northford; died Mch. 10, 1816, in the 86th year of his age.

### CALEB FOWLER—FIFTH GENERATION.

CALEB FOWLER, second son of Josiah, sen., was born Jan. 6, 1727. He married ANNA ROSE of North Branford, Jan. 10, 1759; she was born Sept. 20, 1735.

Caleb Fowler inherited the family homestead in Durham. He taught a District School, winters, for about thirty years. His wife also had been a school teacher. Their children received a better education than was common in those times. He was eminently a pious man. He loved to read "New Divinity" sermons, and to listen to "New Light" preaching. He was very regular in his secret devotions, as well as in his public service. Before

going to bed at night, and in the morning when he had dressed himself, he always knelt down by his bed-side and prayed in a whispering voice, but with distinct utterances, for perhaps five minutes. This I saw, for I slept with him. He regarded Saturday as a sort of *preparation* day for the Sabbath. Immediately after dinner, he would place his shaving-cup on the coals, would then sharpen his razor, shave himself without a glass, change his linen, brush his clothes, and then sit down to read his bible, which lay upon a stand, in his bedroom. Then he would read some religious book, like "Strong's Sermons," which he greatly admired. After tea, or, as it was then called, supper, the children, two of us, and any young person in the family, were catechised from the "Assembly's Catechism," and this practice was continued for years after his death as an ordinance in the family. On the Sabbath he was apparently "in the spirit," whether at church or at home. The present writer remembers the Sabbath-Day House inherited by Caleb Fowler, very distinctly. He remembers spending a Sabbath noon very pleasantly in that house, before the great blazing fire on the hearth, kindled from dry wood, carefully provided. The family were brought about two miles, in a large two-horse sleigh, partially covered, and deposited at the door of the meeting-house. The horses were driven under a shed; a basket of "creature comforts" was carried to the Sabbath-Day House, for dinner; where a fire was kindled before service began. At noon, we assembled around the fire, ate the viands, the savory sausages, the large doughnuts; drank the rich, lively cider; united in reading from some good book, and in prayer; and then went to meeting in the afternoon. On returning from church, the catechism was again recited, either to him, or to my father; a chapter in the bible was then read, and family prayer attended; after which, the family ate supper. On the Sabbath he was always careful to wear his broad-brimmed beaver hat, and a handsome hat it was, putting it on before the glass, with a slight touch of pride, if pride it could be called, but evidently honoring the day by wearing his best apparel.

On Thanksgiving-day he was anxious to have a specimen of every kind of meat and vegetables fattened and raised on the farm. After prayers, on returning from meeting, and before the supper, though a pattern of temperance, he would carefully prepare a mug

of flip, with the choicest Jamaica rum, would heat the flip-iron to the exact temperature, and, after he had raised a high head of foam, he would, with his own hands, present the mug to each one, in a pleasant yet respectful manner, as if offering a libation to the giver of all good.

During the war of the Revolution he was an ardent whig; took pains to manufacture saltpetre for powder; furnished a soldier for the army, for some time; lent money to the Government, some of which is now due. A copy of the balance in his favor I received from Joseph W. Hand, taken by him from some of the Departments at Washington.

He lived in the largest house, had the best orchard in the town of Durham, and manufactured the best of cider. He was generous to his minister, was a good liver, and was given to hospitality. At the three meals, meat was on the table, and besides cider, the family retained the English practice of brewing beer.

He owned three slaves, a man and his wife and their child. The man's name was TOM. He served in the Revolutionary army. He was faithful, contented and happy, until some one filled his head with notions of liberty. He then applied to Mr. Fowler for liberty for himself, his wife, and child. Mr. Fowler, after telling him that what he gained in liberty, he would lose in comfort, gave freedom to them all. After an absence of a year or more, he returned to Mr. Fowler with the earnest request that he would take them all back as slaves, and support them. But he refused to do it.

When seventy-three years of age he divided his property among his children. He spent the last years of his life in my father's family, on the old homestead, enjoying a cheerful and healthy old age, reading good books, enjoying good company, cultivating good fruit on the farm, and the grace of holiness in his heart, waiting the summons of his Heavenly Father, to his heavenly home. When that summons came he was ready. He was taken slightly unwell in the evening, and next morning he was in heaven. In the last hour of his life, some one removed his bible from the stand near the head of his bed, he said, "Let it remain there." When dying he was not willing to be separated from a friend that had been his constant companion when living. He died June 21, 1807, in the eighty-first year of his age.

His wife, ANNA ROSE, died May 10, 1798, in the sixty-third year of her age.

Their children were, 1, ANNA, born Oct. 23, 1761, married NATHANIEL THAYER, M. D., died May 23, 1847, in the 86th year of her age; 2, REUBEN ROSE, born June 17, 1763, died Aug. 16, 1844; 3, IRENE, born Nov. 5, 1764, married AMOS FOWLER of Westfield, Mass., died January 30, 1850; 4, OZIAS, born July 25, 1766, died 1767; 5, JULIUS, born April 17, 1768, died July 30, 1832; 6, EDMUND FOWLER, born Feb. 25, 1770, died May 26, 1828; 7, LUCRETIA FOWLER, born Mch. 10, 1772, married DEACON CHAPMAN of Pittsfield, died Dec. 8, 1850, aged 79 years and 9 months; 8, OZIAS, born July 2, 1774, still living; 9, PAMELA, born Sept. 27, 1798, married JOSIAH PARMELEE of Windsor, Vt., died ———.

The emigrant ancestor of ANNA ROSE was ROBERT ROSE, who came from Watertown, Massachusetts, to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where he was in 1635. ROBERT, his son, or himself, died in Branford in 1664–5, leaving a good estate. Rev. George I. Wood, in his sermon on the early history of North Branford, says of this Robert, "that he was one of the eight individuals who owned originally the township of Branford. Tradition reports that he owned ten cows, (besides sixty horses,) at a time when there were not ten more in all Branford, and that the *Sunday's milking* was always given to the poor. The bible he brought with him from England, printed in 1590, is still extant, in the possession of Widow Hannah Rose, and has been, in its time, the property of three Deacons of the Rose family." JOHN ROSE removed to Branford, and was there in 1665. He may have been a son of the first Robert, and father of Jonathan.

CAPT. JONATHAN ROSE was the ancestor of the Roses of North Branford. Tradition informs us that he erected the first house within the present limits of North Branford. His children were DANIEL, REV. DAVID, SAMUEL, JACOB, NATHAN, JONATHAN, HANNAH, SARAH.

The children of JACOB ROSE were CAPT. REUBEN, BILLY, ANNA, (Fowler); CLOE, (Burnham); MARY, (Hubbard and Bird); LUCY, (Mulford); REBECCA, (Elliott.)

### REUBEN ROSE FOWLER—SIXTH GENERATION.

REUBEN ROSE FOWLER, the eldest son of Caleb and Anna Rose Fowler of Durham, was born in Durham, June 17, 1763.

His parents were both of them school teachers, his father for many winters, though he was a large farmer. As he was the eldest son, they exercised their vocation upon him in giving him instruction in the rudiments of learning. To this circumstance it was probably owing that in early life he was strongly inclined to study. With his own hands he made for himself a small table, on which he kept his books, and on which he wrote. So much attached to this was he, after he entered the period of youth, that the family sportively called it his Dagon, that is, his idol. He taught a district school in Guilford when he was but fifteen years of age, and afterwards elsewhere, repeatedly. So thorough an English education did he obtain in the process of time, that James Wadsworth of Genesee, N. Y., himself a highly educated man, said of him, that "he understood the English language, in its vocabulary and construction, better than any man he ever knew." He also became an excellent French scholar. I remember well his small but excellent library of French authors, such as Racine, &c.

On leaving Durham he established himself as a merchant in New Haven, where he was successful, and was of the same standing with Titus Street and Abraham Bradley. With success his views became broader and his hopes higher. Taking letters from President Stiles and other gentlemen in New Haven, he established himself as a merchant in Newbern, North Carolina. Not finding his business equal to his expectations, he returned to Connecticut, and not long after visited the State of New York with James Wadsworth, Esq., for the purpose of purchasing wild land. Mr. Wadsworth made his purchase in the Genesee Valley. Mr. Fowler purchased a tract of several hundred acres in Whitestown, and soon after commenced clearing a part of it.

Soon after this he came to Connecticut, and, March 14, 1790, married Catharine Chauncy, daughter of Elnathan Chauncy of Durham, and in April went with her upon his new farm. Here he labored with good success; but the climate or the occupation not agreeing with his health, or with the tastes of either his wife or himself, he sold his farm and returned to Connecticut, and for some years resided in Killingworth, now Clinton. Here, with Dr. Aaron Elliott, he was engaged in the manufacture of steel. He was also occupied in land speculations, in Upper Canada, in Vermont, and the Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania. He continued

in these speculations for some time after he returned to Durham. Some of these speculations were on a large scale, embracing several hundred thousand acres, and promising great profits, which since have been realized to others, but not to Mr. Fowler. He came out of his speculations neither enriched nor impoverished. A Mr. Stedman gave a bond, with ten thousand dollars penalty, to execute a deed of three hundred thousand acres of land on Grand River in Upper Canada. Mr. Fowler, on the strength of this bond, went on and made conditional sales of a portion of this land to settlers who were expected to form a colony. But Stedman refused to execute the deed, and he was therefore put in jail in New Haven, where, in consequence of some disease, he died without giving the deed. This was a tract of land of great value, of which Mr. Fowler barely failed to obtain the title. Having in this, as in other operations, shown great sagacity, enterprise and energy, he withdrew from the occupation, and devoted himself to agriculture.

In 1800, his father, in his lifetime, and when in good health, divided his property among his sons and daughters, making an arrangement with his eldest son to reside with him during his lifetime. He having purchased of his brothers and sisters their share of the estate, cultivated the farm very successfully until 1807. He soon put a new face on the farm. The old hedge fences were cut down and replaced by substantial stone walls; the old pasture lots were ploughed and converted into mowing or productive pasture; the orchards were trimmed and grafted, and bore fruit abundantly. The productions of the farm were trebled in amount and value. On the 27th of April, 1802, his house, the largest in the town, and containing a large amount of valuable property, was destroyed by fire. After making great exertions during the night he came the next morning, after breakfast, to the smouldering ruins, great numbers of people standing round, sympathetic and silent. Instead of desponding, the first word which he uttered was to point out the site for a new house, a little to the west of where the old one stood, which he immediately proceeded to erect. Thus was he always hopeful and firm in the most trying circumstances.

Having sold his farm in 1807, he removed, November 26, 1809, to East Guilford, now Madison, where he engaged, first in mercantile

pursuits, and then in agriculture, and where he continued to reside while he lived.

He was a man of great energy of character, of great enterprise in business, and of great confidence in his own perceptions of truth and duty. He was discriminating and acute in his judgments, able in argument, and sharp in reply and retort when unfairly pressed.

He made a public profession of religion in his native town in early life, when it was not fashionable for the young to join the church. He was well acquainted with the doctrines and evidences of the Christian religion, and with the principles of law and of politics. He was first a staunch Federalist, and then a Whig, that never wavered. He faithfully and industriously performed the duties of a provident husband and father, and of a patriotic and useful citizen. His epitaph, in a few words, describes his character:—

"Reuben Rose Fowler, born June 17, 1763, and died August 16, 1844, aged 81. Earnest and successful in the pursuit of truth, enterprising and skilful in business, and firm in the performance of what he deemed his duty, he passed his days on earth in the fear of God, and died in the hopes of a glorious resurrection."

He married, March 14, 1790, CATHARINE CHAUNCEY, daughter of Elnathan Chauncey. See "*Chauncey Memorials*," pp. 185–190.

THEIR CHILDREN—SEVENTH GENERATION.

I. WILLIAM CHAUNCEY FOWLER, born December, 1790, died June 25, 1792; buried in Durham.

II. WILLIAM CHAUNCEY FOWLER, the present writer. See "*Chauncey Memorials*," pp. 190–192.

III. ELIZA ANN FOWLER, born December 11, 1795, died March 24, 1849. See "*Chauncey Memorials*," p. 190.

IV. CHARLES AUGUSTUS FOWLER, born April 13, 1798; died September 13, 1825. See "*Chauncey Memorials*," p. 193.

V. CATHARINE WORTHINGTON FOWLER, married JOSEPH WINBORN HAND. See "*Chauncey Memorials*," p. 194.

For many of the facts I am indebted to Hon. R. D. Smith of Guilford. W. C. F.

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